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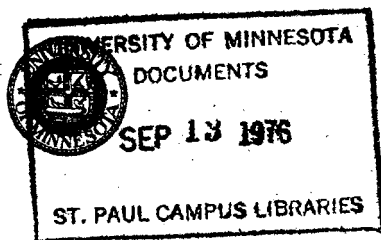
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News Writing

**FOR HOME DEMONSTRATION
REPORTERS**

Harold L. Harris



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PAMPHLET 25
Agricultural Extension Division
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A WORD TO THE REPORTER

AS reporter for your extension project group, you can wield much influence in your community. Publicity is perhaps the most powerful force in the civilized world. This was realized long ago by the man who said, "The pen is mightier than the sword." The reason is that "A drop of ink makes millions think." Publicity makes and molds public opinion.

As reporter for a single group, your sphere is small, but within it your opportunities are unlimited. Upon what you write regarding your group will depend many things of vital importance to extension work.

Good local project publicity should stimulate interest among members of your group; give credit to leaders, hostesses and others for special service; show how project lessons are being applied in the homes; foster friendly rivalry among groups throughout the county; and last, but not least, give folks outside the project an interesting picture of what the groups and their members are doing.

Keep in mind, however, that the reader can get nothing out of your story* that you do not put into it. If your stories are to be lively, interesting and worthwhile, you must pack them with live, interesting and informative facts and statements. This pamphlet will help you to pick good material and to write effective stories.

* The term "story," as used in this pamphlet, means "item" or "article." "Story" is the term editors use in referring to all kinds of news articles.

Writing News Is Like Making a Dress

**First, Select
the Goods;
Second, Follow
a Correct
Pattern**

Writing a publicity item or "story" is much like making a dress. First, the goods must be selected; and second, they must be put together according to a desirable pattern. The "goods" for a story are the facts or statements that are to go into it. The "pattern" is the arrangement of these facts and statements in their proper order—first, second, and so on.

**Stories May
Be Plain or
Fancy**

Like dresses, stories may be plain or fancy; just which, will often depend on the "goods." We do not use a lot of trimming on an ordinary cotton dress. Similarly, if we are making our story from just ordinary facts, we should avoid high-sounding words and phrases, too much cleverness and humor, or other story "trimmings." On the other hand, to neglect good story material by failing to trim it up a little is as deplorable as to spoil fine dress material by making it up carelessly. Skillful story writing, then, requires good taste.

The beginner at writing, like the beginner at dressmaking, will do well to try only simple things, gradually acquiring the taste and skill for more elaborate creations. Practice will bring a sense of sureness that will be very gratifying.

Picking the "Goods"

**Choosing
Facts Most
Important
Step**

Choosing the facts or material is the first and most important step in preparing a story. When a woman picks goods for a dress, she first considers the purpose of the garment, whether for housework, party, or street wear. Use governs the kind of goods to buy. Having this in mind, she asks to see the different pieces of suitable goods her merchant has in stock and then makes her choice.

**Keep
Your Eyes
and Ears
Open; Ask
Questions**

The same procedure is advisable in selecting news or publicity material. First consider the purpose of the story. Having decided whether it is to report a meeting, to announce plans for some future event, to show results of project work, to stress group attendance and interest, or to do something else, the next thing to do is look for appropriate facts. Be sure you look at them all. Keep your eyes and ears open and ask questions. Don't stop until you are sure you have obtained all the facts relating to the thing you want to write about. Having the entire "stock" before you, you may proceed with the choosing.

**Look for the
New; Avoid
the Ordinary**

The best material is that which is new or different. Avoid things that are merely ordinary and routine. For instance, in reporting a meeting, don't bother to say that the meeting was called to order, that the roll was called, that the secretary read the minutes, or that other routine business was transacted. These things are common to most meetings and are not news. Instead, get facts that are fresh, important, different, unusual. Here are a few pointers on what to look for:

**Some
Things to
Look for**

1. Attendance (large, 100 per cent, a record, big despite bad weather).
2. What was done (project lesson taught, special "doings," committees appointed).
3. Reports from members or leaders (how they are using project ideas in their own homes, improvements made, what they say, etc.).
4. Miscellaneous group activities (things group does outside of project work, etc.; plans for Achievement Day).
5. Time and place of next meeting.

Persons quick to recognize interesting points for stories are said to have a "nose for news." Some persons seem to be born with the knack, but anyone can develop it through constant alertness. Con-

sider everything you see or hear in the light of its possibilities for interesting other people. Learn to ask questions.

**Use Interesting Details,
Not General
Statements**

The following sentence, taken from an actual story by a home management group reporter, shows how many reporters "slip up": "The ladies all took notes on the various subjects and told of the recent improvements and changes made in their kitchens, and how many other women they had helped." Had this reporter actually described some of the improvements and changes made in the kitchens, she would have had a much more interesting and valuable story. Perhaps one of these women had solved a particularly difficult kitchen problem in an exceptionally clever and original way. If so, the facts about just how she did it would have made a splendid story.

**Follow Up
Good Tips**

Another news possibility, which the sentence quoted only hinted at, was the help given other women by the project members. For instance, the story might have told how many were helped, what kinds of help were given, which project member helped the largest number of women, or how the outsiders responded to helpful suggestions. The reporter could have gained much of this information from listening to the reports and could have learned more about points of special interest by talking with individuals later.

**Names
Make News
Interesting**

Names are among the most important things in any story. Don't hesitate to use them whenever a good opportunity presents itself. Here is a sentence from a story written by a group reporter: "When ventilation was discussed, one member explained the use of a canopy installed over her gas stove to keep the smoke and grease out of the kitchen. It had proved very satisfactory." In this case the interest-value of the story would have been heightened by giving the member's name. Another golden oppor-

tunity which this reporter neglected was to describe the canopy, tell where it was bought or who made it, what it cost, and other facts.

**But Names
Are Sacred,
So Be
Judicious**

Caution is necessary, however, in using names—and this is something every reporter should bear in mind. Never use a name when to do so might cause sorrow or embarrassment to the person named, or to anyone else. Strictly private matters should be kept out of the newspapers. Stories relating to child development, nutrition, and similar projects that deal with personal matters, such as family behavior or abnormalities of health, must be handled discreetly. Common sense is the best guide, and a good rule is, "When in doubt, leave it out." Frequently an interesting case may be referred to without mentioning the family, but if it is likely that the identity of the person can be inferred from the story, don't take chances.

**Common
Sense Is
Best Guide**

A similar point that needs careful watching is not to make anyone appear silly by reporting some trivial or foolish remark or act. Many a statement or incident that seems perfectly all right in its original setting looks altogether out of place in the newspaper.

If you have the gift of humor, use it in your stories when a proper opportunity comes. Remember to use it moderately, however. Never be so frivolous that the serious purpose of extension work will be overlooked. Humor should be a seasoning for something worthwhile, not a substitute.

**Stress
Results of
Extension
Work**

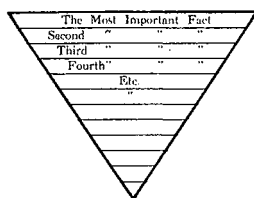
Finally and always, keep in mind that the big job of the reporter is to acquaint the people with the RESULTS of extension work. Almost anything that indicates important changes brought about through the lesson work or social contacts of your group is good material for a story. Although home project work has improvement in some specific line of homemaking as its immediate

object, it has the added object of promoting personal development. Consequently, statements or items of news well may show how women are becoming better acquainted and more friendly through their project meetings; how they are taking more interest in community affairs, schools and recreation; or how they find new enjoyment in attending project gatherings. Stories of this kind are just as appropriate as those relating directly to the project material or its application. Be a bearer of good tidings.

The Standard News Story Pattern

Upside-down
Pyramid Is
Old Stand-by
News Pattern

Now to take up again the thread of our dress-making. Let us suppose we have selected the "goods" for our story. What about the "pattern"? There are as many different patterns for stories as for dresses, but there is one that is used for at least nine out of every ten stories. For average purposes it beats all others, and, for the beginning reporter, has the advantage of being quite simple. If it were possible to consider a story as having a geometrical shape, one written according to the standard pattern would look like



a pyramid upside down or inverted. Each layer of the inverted pyramid would represent a fact or statement, with the "heaviest" or most important fact as the top layer; the second most important fact as the second layer, and so on right down to the point of the pyramid, which would represent the least important fact in the whole story. Study the accompanying diagram of the inverted pyramid.

If you have the questioning mind of a good reporter you will want to know immediately why news stories are written like upside-down pyramids. Briefly, it is because such a pattern best suits the purpose of both the newspaper and the readers.

**Aids in
Shortening
Stories**

Newspapers are often crowded for space. Instead of running only part of the stories on hand, the editor prefers to run them all, but to shorten them. Often this cutting-down has to be done very quickly; perhaps even after the stories are in type. Naturally the editor wants to remove the less important parts of the stories, and the easiest place to do the cutting is at the bottom. That is why he wants the least important fact last. Even if he must cut out half the story, he still has the most important facts left, if the article is written on the upside-down-pyramid plan.

**Saves
Reader's
Time, Builds
Interest**

Now, about the reader. He seldom has time to read everything in the paper. He glances at the beginning of each article. If the most important fact is at the top he gets it, even though he reads no further. Having the important thing first often encourages the reader to read the whole item, which he would not do if the story began with dull or trivial statements.

**Newspapers
Give Story
Patterns**

The simple directions given in the later section headed "Using the Inverted Pyramid Pattern" will enable the reporter to fit his stories to the standard pattern. After that is mastered, other patterns can be tried now and then. Careful reading of newspapers is one of the most practical ways to study the standard story pattern, as well as to get suggestions for many patterns that are more novel and striking.

**Study
Changes
Editors Make**

Another excellent plan is to study your articles after they are printed to see what changes the editor has made. Try to see why he changed certain words or phrases. This will help you do better next time.

Using the Inverted Pyramid Pattern

Begin With the Most Interesting Fact

For the beginning of your story, select the most interesting or the most important thing. Put the point of your story into the first sentence and make the sentence short. Rewrite your "lead" (the beginning of your story, usually the first paragraph), until you feel sure you have one that is interesting, clear, and to the point. Don't begin a news article with a date, or by stating that a meeting was held. Tell something important that happened, that was done, or that was found out at the meeting.

First Paragraph Should Tell What, Who, When, Where

Make your first paragraph tell very briefly what the whole story is about. It should answer the questions, WHAT? WHO? WHEN? WHERE? and if possible, WHY? and HOW? The aim should be to pack the main facts into the first paragraph so completely that if no more of the story gets into print the reader will know what has happened.

Look at the following: "Fourteen poultry project members of Hope township took up hammers and saws at their meeting, Thursday, at the home of Mrs. Frank White,* and learned how to build inexpensive feeders for laying mash. Mrs. John Pike and Miss Olivia Jones, local leaders, supervised the would-be carpenters and presented other points of the lesson on 'Feeding for Egg Production.' "

Note how the two sentences above answer the six questions: "Fourteen poultry project members of Hope township" tells WHO; "learned how to make inexpensive feeders for laying mash" tells WHAT; "Thursday" tells WHEN; "at the home of Mrs. Frank White" tells WHERE; "took up hammers and saws" tells HOW; the statement that it was part of the lesson explains WHY.

* All names used in illustrative sentences or stories in this booklet are fictitious.

Although all six of the stated questions should be answered by the "lead" whenever possible, the HOW and WHY may not always be needed, or they may have to be left until later in the story. The questions, WHAT, WHO, WHEN and WHERE should always be answered in the first paragraph.

**Present Main
Facts in
Order of
Importance**

After giving in your "lead" the most interesting fact and answering briefly the questions, WHAT, WHO, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW, use the remaining paragraphs to enlarge on the main facts of your story, arranging them in the order of their importance; that is, give the most interesting detail first, the next most interesting second, and so on as described in the example of the upside-down pyramid. For instance, in the story about the meeting above, other facts to be given might include the place of the next meeting, whether lunch was served, or what changes or improvements were reported by the group members. (See pointers, page 3.)

**Leave the
Reader
Satisfied**

Every good "lead" will start a train of questions in the reader's mind and the story should furnish the facts which answer such questions. In other words, a good story should tell the news completely enough to leave the reader satisfied. However, only such facts as tend to give important information should be included. Leave out minor details which merely make the story long without telling anything important.

If your story fails to give "the satisfied feeling," it is a sign either that you have not obtained all the facts, or that you have failed to put them into your story. It will help in getting the right facts if you have some idea beforehand of how you will write your story. Remember a news story needs no "ending." Stop right where the important facts leave off.

**Be Concrete
and Specific;
Tell, Don't
Hint**

Be concrete and specific. That means actually telling things, not just hinting at them. If 20 persons attend a meeting, say 20 in your story; don't just say that a large number attended. If a woman reports that her flock increased production from 25 to 60 eggs a day through feeding a balanced ration, give the statement in your story. Don't just say that she reported a large increase. Using specific facts, instead of vague hints, makes the difference between a good live story and one that is worthless and dull.

**Write Only
in Third
Person**

Never address your readers directly in writing your story. For instance, don't say, "You should have one feeder for each 50 hens." Instead, write, "One feeder is needed for each 50 hens." Likewise, avoid saying "I," "we" or "us" in your story. For instance, don't say, "Mrs. White showed us samples of her work." Say, "Mrs. White showed samples of her work to those present," or merely, "Mrs. White showed samples of her work." In other words, *keep both your reader and yourself out of the story.* Write only in the third person.

**Don't
Editorialize**

Avoid making editorial comments or giving your own opinions. State facts only and let the reader draw conclusions for himself. Don't write, "The poultry project certainly gives valuable help." That is opinion. However, you may write, "Members of the project are enthusiastic and feel that the help given is very valuable." This is not opinion, but is a fact which you have observed in your capacity as reporter. Stating it thus would not only be correct as to news form, but also more convincing than merely giving your own opinion.

Develop the art of self-criticism; that is, after your stories have been written, or even after they have been printed, try to find fault with them. See how they might have been corrected or improved. This will help you to do better in the future.

Examples of Inverted Pyramid Stories

Having in mind the points given in the preceding section, study the following story, the first paragraph of which was quoted above:

**Lead
Paragraph
Tells Complete Story**

"Fourteen poultry project members of Hope township took up hammers and saws at their meeting, Thursday, at the home of Mrs. Frank White, and learned how to build inexpensive feeders for laying mash. Mrs. John Pike and Miss Olivia Jones, local leaders, supervised the would-be carpenters and presented other points of the lesson on 'Feeding for Egg Production.'

**Cites Results
of Extension
Work**

"Responding to roll call with results from last month's lesson on housing, several women told of remarkable improvement in the vigor and productivity of their flocks. Mrs. Jacob Norman reported that after installing a straw loft in her poultry house she noticed that the air was much drier and the hens more active and more vigorous looking. Mrs. Nathan Price found that by removing a partition and rearranging roosts her house accommodated 25 per cent more hens. Mrs. Harvey Hanks told how she had made her old hen house warm and comfortable for the winter by banking it on three sides with flax straw. By insulating the old house in this manner she is making it serve as well as possible until a new one can be built.

**Interesting
Details
Included**

"A number of women reported having rearranged the windows of their poultry houses, placing all windows on the south side which gives the greatest light and warmth in winter. About half of the women have found their houses overcrowded. They plan to cull out a part of their hens to give more space for the layers. All members are looking forward to more winter eggs which they have discovered are so large a factor in year-round profits.

**Less
Important
Facts Last**

"The attendance at the meeting was 100 per cent, thereby maintaining the record made at the two previous meetings. Members reported having given suggestions for improving poultry houses to eight of their neighbors who were not enrolled in the project.

"The fourth meeting will be held April 16 at the home of Mrs. Arthur Black."

**Try This
Test on Your
Stories**

Note how the foregoing story complies fully with each rule that has been given above; especially how it follows the inverted-pyramid pattern. This will be more apparent if you imagine one sentence after another cut off, beginning at the bottom of the story. Observe how each sentence or paragraph may be omitted without detracting from the one above. Also that each sentence, up to the very top, is of less importance than the one it follows. Cut as much as you will, you still have left the most essential part or parts of the story. Try this test on your own stories. It will literally force you to arrange your facts according to their relative importance.

**Time Alters
News Value**

In the poultry meeting story quoted above, there might be some misunderstanding about the last sentence: "The fourth meeting will be held April 16 at the home of Mrs. Arthur Black." At first thought, this sentence may seem more important than some others that precede it, and therefore that putting it last violates the rule of inverted-pyramid arrangement. Remember, however, that the primary purpose of this story is to tell of a meeting just held, not of one four weeks in the future. Two weeks later, of course, the announcement of the forthcoming meeting would be the more important fact and should be placed at the top of a story.

On the next few pages are additional sample stories. Study these stories carefully, noting the facts given, their arrangement and the style of writing.

THREE MEETINGS HELD WITHOUT AN ABSENCE

Setting its third 100 per cent attendance mark, the Clover township nutrition project group met Friday, June 5, at the home of Mrs. George Jones. "Nutrition of the Growing Child" was the lesson subject presented by the leaders, Mrs. John Grant and Mrs. O. F. Bigley.

Growth records of five children, exhibited by the mothers, clearly demonstrated the value of milk and rest. By simply increasing the milk from a pint to a quart, three of the children have made a steady gain in weight and are sleeping better. One of these children dislikes to drink milk, but is consuming his quart of it in custards, cream soups, cottage cheese and cereals.

Mrs. Robert Smith has reported keen appetites and a gain of one pound a month in her two boys, aged 7 and 9, as a result of resting 15 minutes before lunch and supper, and going to bed at 7:30 instead of 8:30.

Sixteen of the members who planned their gardens not only have had greens for the table for the last three weeks, but have canned one-half of their entire winter supply of spinach, chard and asparagus.

That oven meals, raw salads, and desserts have not only simplified meal planning, but have become popular with their families, was reported by at least half the members. Mildred Hartle, county home demonstration agent, stated that local merchants had noticed the effect of the project in increasing their sales of tomatoes, oranges, fresh greens, molasses, and even liver.

Mesdames Smith, Jones and Grant were selected by the nutrition group to serve on the school lunch committee for the Clover Consolidated School. The home demonstration agent was asked to meet with them to work out plans for a canning center for the school lunch.

Miss Hartle outlined the plan for the county Nutrition Check-Up Day, at which all of the leaders and township chairmen will meet with the state nutrition specialist from the extension division of the University.

CHECK-UP SHOWS RESULTS HOME MANAGEMENT WORK

One hundred twenty-five local leaders, township home chairmen, and others, reviewed accomplishments of the Cornbelt County Home Management project at the county check-up meeting in the city hall, Friday, at Alberton. Miss Theresa Thomas, home demonstration agent, presided, and Miss Maud Schiller, home demonstration specialist, spoke.

Summary reports prepared by the leaders for their groups showed that 700 women had been enrolled, of which 95 per cent completed the project. Ninety-four local leaders instructed by Miss Schiller and Miss Thomas had presented the five project lessons to their local groups, with a cumulative attendance at the group meetings of 3,309. In all, 2,761 persons had been helped by the project.

Intended primarily to show housewives how to make their kitchens brighter and more cheerful, as well as how to arrange them for greater efficiency, the project has resulted in a great many improvements.

Reports indicated that 4,663 rooms were papered, painted or otherwise redecorated; 743 floors were improved and 2,105 pairs of curtains bought or made over. More than 300 kitchens were remodeled or rearranged to enable homemakers to work more easily and more systematically. Time saved by these improvements, on meal preparation alone, ranged from 5 to 45 minutes a meal; or from 2 to 12 hours a week. These savings in steps were due to the shifting of work centers, the regrouping of supplies and equipment in cupboards, and to the fact that 198 more women now use trays and push tables, many of which were made at home from lumber on hand or from old-time wash stands.

Women said that through the home management project they have learned to save many steps merely by planning their work and keeping their minds on the task at hand. Numerous transformations of dark, dingy kitchens into bright cheerful ones were also reported.

Besides the material benefits derived from their project study, the women reported a better spirit of neighborliness and helpfulness in all groups.

DOVER GROUP HOLDS A SPECIAL CHECK-UP

Children of women enrolled in the Dover township group of the child development project were guests at a special check-up meeting, Thursday afternoon, July 30, at the home of Mrs. L. A. Smith. Following the five regular project lessons, the group decided to hold this additional meeting to finish up reports and enjoy a social farewell get-together. Each child present was weighed on scales provided by Mrs. Smith, and his weight and height measurements included in his mother's report.

Answering to roll call, each mother stated briefly what use she had made of the suggestions for play materials given in the preceding lesson. Mrs. Frank Thomas stated that she had worked out a plan for providing play equipment, a piece at a time, to keep pace with the growth and needs of her children.

Mrs. Jacob Anderson explained that her husband was building a sand table so that when cold weather came the sand box could be taken indoors. She believes the sand box will prove useful during the winter, as well as for outdoor play in summer.

Mrs. T. C. Jones told of having purchased a load of kindling, in which many interesting blocks and pieces of material for nailing and sawing were found. Through the lesson on play she has learned that there are endless possibilities for keeping her small boy and girl happy and busy.

All the women feel that the project lessons have helped them greatly in understanding the growth, mental and emotional development, and habits of their children, thereby making easier many of the problems of parenthood. After the meeting, light refreshments were served to the women and children by Mrs. James Larson and Mrs. Roy Erickson.

All members are looking forward to the county check-up day in October and the second project in child development to be offered later under the direction of the county home demonstration agent and Miss Myrna Holt, child development specialist of the state agricultural college. Only women who have completed the first project may enroll for the second series of child development lessons.

BLANK COUNTY WILL HAVE CLOTHING STUDY

"How can I clothe myself and my family most satisfactorily and economically?" Homemakers of Blank county may find the answer to this important question by taking part in the clothing project during the coming five months, says Miss Martha King, county home demonstration agent.

The project will consist of five monthly lessons given free under Miss King's direction with the assistance of a clothing specialist from the home demonstration staff at University Farm.

"The sweeping changes that have taken place in clothing for the whole family in the last few years have led homemakers into a sea of worry," says Miss King. Among the questions that now confront the family clothing buyer are:

Is it more economical to buy "ready-mades" or to make clothes at home? Do I get as good style in my home-made garments? What styles are "correct" for my figure? Is time more economically used by sewing or by taking care of a larger flock of chickens? Will time spent on a larger flock of chickens provide means to purchase ready-mades? If I buy ready-mades—what shall I buy? What kinds of clothing are most appropriate, serviceable, comfortable?

"Most women have been too close to their job of homemaking to give these changed conditions much thought," says Miss King. "Consequently the home demonstration projects in clothing have been designed to answer the new problems brought about by these drastic changes. More consideration is given to the selection phases of clothing than to the mere technique of sewing."

To rural women who enroll for the five meetings, the clothing specialist will present facts on correct methods of construction which will give assistance in new methods and finishes in garment-making, and which will allow the home dressmaker to develop at home a trim, tailored effect found in quality, ready-made garments.

Each woman will learn the type of garment which is correct in all respects for her figure; that is, lines of garments which will "cover up," rather than accentuate, undesirable angles, and curves and colors which flatter. Materials that will give service, and garments that are comfortable and easy to take care of, are other fea-

tures of the clothing project which is part of the educational service offered by the State Agricultural Extension Division and U. S. Department of Agriculture in co-operation with the county extension service and farm bureau.

Important Things to Remember

Write Just Enough to Give Important Facts

Abraham Lincoln said that a man's legs should be long enough to reach to the ground and no longer. Similarly, a story should be long enough to give the important or interesting facts and no longer. As a rule, stories of project meetings should not be longer than the examples given above. However, give all that seems of importance. Give it briefly and let the editor shorten if he finds it necessary.

Avoid Copying Others

Reading articles on the other project groups in your county may give you some good suggestions. However, avoid merely copying what others do. The editor, and readers also, will appreciate stories that have an unusual snap or flavor. Try to be original and different, being careful not to go to ridiculous extremes. "Go safely while learning" is an excellent motto.

Don't Include Lesson Material

Don't pad your stories with bits of lesson material. Remember there may be 20 or more groups in your county, all taking the same subject material, so it would become very monotonous if each reporter put points from the lesson into her stories. What she should do is include facts showing results secured from following project suggestions, such as those quoted above in the story about increasing egg production from feeding a balanced ration. These reports on results from the different groups will vary enough to avoid too great monotony. Also, being tied up with the names of different persons in each case, they tend to be far more interesting.

**Use Only
Local Facts**

The whole point is to stick strictly to LOCAL FACTS. The specialist, county or home demonstration agent, or county publicity chairman, will undoubtedly furnish the papers a general story on the subject matter contained in each lesson. Then if the group reporters will give the important local facts of the group meetings, everything will be covered thoroughly and without monotonous repetition or too much general material.

**Mail
Stories
Promptly**

News is not news unless it is new, so get your stories in on time. Find out on what day your editor wants your stories to arrive and see that they get there. Never wait a week before writing your story, but do it at once.

**Don't Pester
the Editor**

Finally, remember to treat the editor with proper regard. He is not obliged to print your stories, although he will surely want to if they are newsy and well written. He cannot guarantee, however, to use all of your article, or to use it in just the way or at just the time you expect. If your article doesn't appear, or if it is changed or cut down, don't call him up or "bawl him out." Try to understand that the editor has a great many problems and may not always be able to please everybody. Drop in and see him occasionally and get his suggestions. Most editors will be glad to see you and help in every way possible if you show the proper spirit.

**Be Brief,
Clear, Direct;
Don't Use
Big Words**

Good news-writing is telling things in the shortest, clearest and simplest way possible. So don't use big words or flowery language. Write as you would talk. Go over your stories carefully before sending them to the editor, cut out all unnecessary words and replace long ones with shorter ones whenever possible. This will aid greatly in making your stories brief, clear and direct. Asking others to criticize your stories or offer suggestions is one of the best ways to attain clearness.

Some Pointers on Preparing Copy

1. Write your stories on white or yellow paper, 8½ by 11 inches.
 2. Use only one side of the paper.
 3. If you do not have a typewriter, write with a soft, black pencil, or black ink. Be sure to write plainly and print out names in hand-written copy.
 4. Leave the top one-fourth of your first page blank. Allow wide margins on both sides and at the bottom of all pages.
 5. Space lines far enough apart that an extra line may be written between.
 6. Spell out in full all words except those, such as Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc., that are to appear abbreviated in the paper. Never use "&" for "and."
 7. Be sure to spell names and give initials correctly. Failure to give names fully and correctly is the unpardonable sin in news-reporting. Use the full name or initials of a person the first time he or she is mentioned in the story. After that, simply use the last name with the proper title, as Mr. Thompson, Dr. Smith, Miss Hanson, etc.
 8. Spell out numbers when they begin a sentence, as "Fourteen women attended." If numbers occur elsewhere than at the beginning of the sentence, express them in figures, as "Mrs. John Jones culled out 15 hens."
 9. Use as few capital letters as good grammar will permit. Sentences must begin with capitals, of course, and names of persons, towns, etc.
 10. Do not attempt to write headlines. The editor has to write heads to fit the space available in each case.
- Allow Wide Margins**
- Spell Names; Give Initials Correctly**
- Don't Write Headlines**

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